

Message Text

SECRET

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21

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 051605Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3315

S E C R E T THE HAGUE 1749

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJECT: CENTURION TANKS

REF: STATE 61731

1. IN PRIVATE MEETING WITH FONMIN VAN DER STOEL APRIL 5 I RAISED CENTURION TANK MATTER, REFERRING TO ISRAELI AMBASSADOR'S EARLIER APPROACH TO MOD VREDELING (THE HAGUE 1356) AND EMPHASIZING EXTREME CARE WITH WHICH WE WERE TREATING MATTER IN VIEW OF ITS OBVIOUS VOLATILITY.

2. I SAID SHOULD GON BE AMENABLE TO DECLARING UP TO AS MANY AS 200 CENTURIONS IN ITS INVENTORY AS EXCESS, US WOULD BE PREPARED TO SHIP THEM BY US BILL OF LADING AND IN US BOTTOMS TO ISRAEL. WE REALIZED IF TRANSACTION BECAME PUBLIC IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR GON TO ACCOMMODATE ISRAELI REQUEST EVEN IF IT WISHED TO DO SO.

3. VAN DER STOEL SAID HE WOULD PROMPTLY TAKE MATTER UP WITH VREDELING AND WITH ONLY TWO OF HIS STAFF (DIRGEN POL AFFS VAN LYNDEN AND NATO DIRECTOR VAN DER VALK), AND BE BACK IN TOUCH AS SOON AS GON REACHES A DECISION. IT WOULD BE EASY TO DETERMINE IMPACT ON NETHERLANDS' DEFENSE OF RELEASING THE TANKS. HOWEVER, HE SAID, POLITICAL ASPECT OF MATTER WAS VERY COMPLEX IN VIEW OF ARABS' ACUTE SENSITIVITY TO ANYTHING EVEN VAGUELY RESEMBLING AN ANTI-ARAB GESTURE. HE CITED EXTREME AND SECRET

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UNJUSTIFIED CHARGES ARABS HAVE MADE OF ANTI -ARAB BIAS

IN NETHERLANDS TO JUSTIFY MAINTENANCE OF OIL EMBARGO.

4. WE DISCUSSED PROPOSED TRANSACTION FROM LEGAL
VIEWPOINT: IT INVOLVED RETURN TO US CUSTODY OF PROPERTY
TO WHICH US HAS RETAINED TITLE AND THE NETHERLANDS
WOULD NOT BE DEALING WITH ISRAEL.
GOULD

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 05 APR 1974
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